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## A SAFAITIC HUNTING SCENE

The extremely interesting Safaitic rock-drawing recently published by G. Lankester Harding (*Annals of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, ii, pp. 29–30) as no. 73 of the inscriptions from the cairn of Hāni, shows two scenes. One represents goats being herded into a cattle-pen, the other a hunting scene. In the latter three largish animals are being hunted by a man with bow and arrow, a man with upraised arms, and a third man who holds three hunting-dogs by a leash (this, rather than Harding's 'whip or long rope', is surely the correct interpretation of the line which extends from the man's hand round the heads of the dogs). Harding confesses himself unable to identify the animals being hunted. Two at least of these, however, are very clearly characterized in the drawing by long straight horns and a long tail with a tuft at the end. The combination of these characteristics indicates pretty clearly, I suggest, that the animals are intended to represent the oryx (see the *Encyclopædia Britannica* description of this animal).

The accompanying inscription describes the subject of the drawing by two words, of which the first (*šlt*) is interpreted by Harding (on Littmann's authority) as 'cattle-pen', and this is certainly correct. The reading of the second word is dubious; it consists of *alif* followed by two letters which could be *b* or *s*. Harding considers that 'bb makes nonsense, and reads 'sb which he equates with Arabic *sā'iba* 'any beast which is left to pasture where it wills'. In this case the word would presumably allude to three goats which appear to be escaping from the pen in the first scene. But it is more likely that the two words allude, not to one scene only, but respectively to the two scenes: the second word would therefore relate to the hunting scene. I suggest that we might read 'bb 'prairie, open pasture-land' (cf. Arabic 'abb, Hebrew 'alib). The two words designate the localities where the two scenes are respectively set.

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## THE NAME 'NEPAL'

In a recently published historical work, *Nepālko aitihāsik rūp-rekhā* (Historical Outline of Nepal) by Bālcandra Śarmā, Banāras 2008 V.S. (= A.D. 1951/52) the author devotes some space to the meaning of the name *Nepal*; as he has no faith in the 'traditional' explanation, and as the alternative which finds favour with him is open to grave misgivings, a re-examination of this problem might not be out of place now.

The first occurrence of the name to which any near date can be assigned is undoubtedly in the posthumous panegyric of Samudragupta, presumed to have been inscribed at the order of his son Candragupta II in the middle of the 4th century A.D., on the rock-pillar of Allāhābād, which cites, among others, the sovereign of *Nepāla* as a tributary prince:—*samataṭa-ḍavāka-kāmarūpa-nepāla-*

*karṭṭipurāḍi-pratyanta-nṛpatibhir* . . .<sup>1</sup> Here the orthography is unquestionable, and more dependable than any evidence from manuscripts, inasmuch as these are never free from the suspicion of interpolation and 'modernizing' by copyists. It may be concluded from this evidence alone that the name *nepāla* was already established in this form by this time; for there is very little manuscript evidence available. The word *nepāla* does not, apparently, occur in the Vedas,<sup>2</sup> Epics, or the principal Purāṇas, 'malgré la place considérable que l'Himālaya occupe dans leurs récits et leurs légendes',<sup>3</sup> although it seems to have existed in some form in the Paisācī *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya in one of the *Velūlapaṇcaviṃśati* stories, if we can judge by the Sanskrit versions<sup>4</sup>; and the vṛddhied derivative *naipālīka-* occurs in the *Bhārāvya-nūṭya-jāstra*<sup>5</sup> of the 4th or 5th century A.D. After this period the word occurs with increasing frequency, particularly in the Buddhist literature; though the derivatives *naipāla-*, *naipālīka-* seem commoner than the simple form.<sup>6</sup>

The 'traditional' interpretation of the etymology of *nepāla* is that of native works such as the Nepālī *Bhāṣāvaṃśāvalī*,<sup>7</sup> the late Sanskrit *Paśupati-purāṇa*<sup>8</sup> and *Nepāla-māhātmya*,<sup>9</sup> taking the word as Sanskrit and analysing as *ne* + *pāla-*. As a *bahuvrīhi* compound, this would mean 'having *Ne* as its protector', which has led to the invention of a saint so named. Hodgson<sup>10</sup> arrives at what is substantially the same result by the ingenuous assumption that *pāla-* = 'cherished', and here is followed blindly by Northey<sup>11</sup>; and this explanation is quoted in one form or another by Śarmā,<sup>12</sup> Lévi,<sup>13</sup> Northey and Morris,<sup>14</sup> and others. The story as given in the Sanskrit texts mentioned sounds not implausible. Thus, the *Paśupati-purāṇa* has:—

*nenāmnā muninā pūrvam pālanūt puṇyakuṇṇinā  
idaṃ hi hinuvat-kukṣurā nepāla iti cocyate.*<sup>15</sup>

and the *Nepālamāhātmya*, with a variation of the personal name:—

*neme . . . pālanīyam tvaṃ yā (idaṃ) kṣetram . . . tapodhana!*<sup>16</sup>

But apart from texts such as these, *Ne* has no independent existence. *ne* is no known Sanskrit word, still less a proper name. *nemi* (the name usually

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. III, p. 8, line 22 of the edict.

<sup>2</sup> The *Atharvapurifiṣṭa*, which mentions *nepāla* along with *kāmarūpa* (cf. Weber, *Verzeich. der Hscr. der Kön. Bibl. Berlin*, I, p. 93) is a comparatively late work and of little relevance for the present example.

<sup>3</sup> S. Lévi, *Le Népal*, Paris, 1922, II, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Somadeva, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, XII, XXII, v. 3; and Ksemendra, *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, IX, v. 728.

<sup>5</sup> XIII, 32.

<sup>6</sup> This may be explained in part by *naipāla-*, *-ika*, signifying also (a) red arsenic; (b) copper; (c) several spp. of plant, specially *Jasminum sambac*.

<sup>7</sup> D. Wright, (ed.) *History of Nepal*, Cambridge 1877.

<sup>8</sup> *Paśupati-purāṇa*, XXI.

<sup>9</sup> *Nepāla-māhātmya*, XII.

<sup>10</sup> B. H. Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*, London 1874, p. 51, f.n.

<sup>11</sup> W. Brooke Northey, *The Land of the Gurkhas*, Cambridge ND, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> op. cit., II, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> W. Brooke Northey and C. J. Morris, *The Gurkhas*, London 1928, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup> loc. cit.

given in the *Nepālamāhātmya*) is certainly possible in Sanskrit, and the word (normally = 'felly of a wheel') is not unknown as a name; and this is sometimes varied into *niyama*- (Hodgson, loc. cit., has 'neyum') with no apparent reason, save possibly to lend colour to the story. But a contraction of either of these to *ne* would be most unlikely, still more so a *ne* from *Nimiga* (founder of the Lunar dynasty) or *Nemita* (who was, according to Tāranātha,<sup>1</sup> the father of Aśoka), who are brought into the picture by later writers. All these are pseudo-connexions depending on the first assumption, and are really only subsequent postulations designed to lend verisimilitude to this 'etymology'. It would indeed be tempting to the Nepalese Buddhists to connect this *Ne* with the Sanskrit  $\sqrt{ni}$  'lead', and thereby equate him with 'le conducteur qui mène au Paradis', Svayambhū Ādibuddha,<sup>2</sup> particularly as in this way *Nepāla* would acquire a patron saint in the same way as the old rival town and district of Gorkhā depends on Gorakṣanātha. But, as Lassen<sup>3</sup> remarks, 'dieses ist aber eitele Erfindung', and Śarmā seems to agree: 'bam sabaliko yas bhamāima bifwas hūdayna', 'I have no confidence in this pronouncement of the *Vam-jāvali*'.<sup>4</sup>

Another suggested interpretation from the Sanskrit side is that offered by Lassen,<sup>5</sup> taking *nepāla* as a *tutpuruṣa*-type compound of *nepa* + *āla*: 'Nêpālu ist wie Pankāla, Himāla und andere Wörter zu erklären, aus *Nêpa* und *āla*, für *ālaja*, Aufenthalt; *nêpa* bedeutet am Fusse eines Berges. *Nêpāla* bedeutet demnach Aufenthalt am Fusse der Berge. Die gunirte Form kommt auch vor in *Vetāla*'. This Lévi rejects, remarking 'il n'applique avec mal à un pays situé dans la montagne même'<sup>6</sup>; and his rejection of the proposition as it stands—which has been totally ignored by other writers, including Śarmā—is not unjustifiable. It is, however, capable of another interpretation, and this will be adverted to later.

Śarmā's favoured alternative is an elaboration of the idea of Waddell<sup>7</sup> to derive *nepāla* from Tibetan sources. This depends on the meaning of Tib. *gnas*. [nɛʔ], 'home, place, etc.', and *bal*, 'wool', and may be disposed of summarily. In the first place, *gnas.bal* is not a known Tibetan compound; and if a compound of these two elements were to be formed the expected order would be *bal.gnas*, or, better, *bal.gyi.gnas*. (This difficulty is not, however, insurmountable, as *gnas.bal* could appear as a modern *volksetymologisch* form to explain *nepāla* within Tibet, spelling [nɛʔ] as *gnas*. to 'strengthen the etymology' in a similar way to the notorious *bskal.pa*. for Sanskrit *kalpa*-; but

<sup>1</sup> Tāranātha's *Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien*, trs. A. Schiefner, St. Petersburg 1860, pp. 26–27.

<sup>2</sup> Lévi, op. cit., II, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, Leipzig 1866, I, p. 76, f.n.

<sup>4</sup> Loc. cit.; the transliteration of Nepālī follows T. W. Clark, *An Introduction to Nepali* (in preparation).

<sup>5</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> op. cit., II, p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> A. L. Waddell, 'Frog-worship amongst the Newars with a note on the etymology of the word Nepal', *Indian Antiquary*, xxii (1893), pp. 292–4.

this is rather far-fetched, and there is no evidence to show that this is the case.<sup>1</sup> In the second place, this hypothesis takes no account of the fact that the realization of Tibetan *gnas*, as [nɛʔ] is modern, and is confined to the speakers of standard central and eastern Tibetan. We are in no position to assume such a realization in the Tibetan of over 1,500 years ago, by when the form *nepāla* was already established as a written form (*vide* para. 2 above)—at a time, in fact, when no system for writing Tibetan had been devised. In any case, if a modern realization be assumed for one member of a compound, it must be assumed for the other—i.e. *bal*, must be realized as [pʰɛl]; and one would expect the features of partial voicing and aspiration, which correlate with the low-tone initial, to be somehow signified in the transcription.<sup>2</sup> Substantially the same objections can be made to the original proposal of Waddell, who interpreted *Nepāla* as the 'Ne' = 'headquarters, shrine' of the 'Pal' = 'hill country'. 'Toute cette combinaison étymologique,' remarks Lévi,<sup>3</sup> 'me semble infiniment suspecte', and Śarmā would have done well to heed this warning.

Lévi himself, however, has some reference<sup>4</sup> to Tibetan: 'La forme tibétaine du nom du Népal, *Bal-po*, semble confirmer l'analyse traditionnelle qui isole la syllabe initiale *ne*'. There seem to be no grounds for such an observation, and this paper resemblance may be no more than coincidental.

Lassen's interpretation, *nepāla* = *nepa* + *ala*, has already been referred to as rejected by Lévi on semantic grounds. He also comments that even if *nīpa* > *nepa*, 'le sens attribué ici à ce mot [*foot of a mountain*] n'a pas d'autre garant qu'une glose de scolaste'.<sup>5</sup> But perhaps he has misled himself by his own opening remarks on this subject: 'Le nom du Népal, *nepāla*, malgré sa physionomie sanscrite, n'offre pas à l'étymologie d'explication satisfaisante'.<sup>6</sup> There is no valid reason why a purely Sanskrit etymology must necessarily be sought for a word occurring in Sanskrit, especially when that word is unknown in the older literature. It is surely more justifiable in the circumstances to seek a Prākritic origin. Nor is the meaning of *nīpa*-, 'foot of a mountain', which occurs in the 'glose de scolaste'<sup>7</sup> necessary to the interpretation; the usual, and etymologically more accountable, meaning 'damp, low-lying' would be sufficient here: for *nepāla* referred—and in popular Nepālī still refers—to the country immediately surrounding Kāṭhmāṇḍū, the valley of the Bāgmatī, for the former existence of which area as a lake there is reliable geological evidence. Furthermore, it is not necessary to regard *-āla*- as a 'contraction' of *ālaka*-, since it may be interpreted as the frequent Old Indo-Aryan suffix *-āla*-/ *-ālu* (*-ā* + *-la*),<sup>8</sup> which lends a meaning 'pertaining to, possessing', or is even

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank Professor W. Simon for his valuable suggestions on this paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> This is in fact the case with modern Tibetan loan-words in Nepālī; cf. Turner, *Nepālī Dictionary*, exx. on p. 923.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, I, p. 223 f.n.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, II, p. 68 f.n.

<sup>5</sup> *op. cit.*, II, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Mahidhara on *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā*, XVI, 37:—*nīcāṣṭha pātanty āpo yutreti nīpo giri-adho-bhāgaḥ*.

<sup>8</sup> cf. S. K. Chatterji, *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, Calcutta 1926, §§ 416,

suffixed without appearing to modify the meaning in any way. Lassen's other quotations (*himāla-*, *paṇcāla-*) are also probably better regarded as compounded with this suffix than with a 'contraction' of *ālaya-*.

The real difficulty from the Sanskrit viewpoint is the *guṇa*-vowel; the *vyddhi ai* would be expected in the Sanskrit derivative of *\*nīpāla-*.<sup>1</sup> But any question concerning *nepāla* must have as its pendant a similar inquiry concerning *nevāra*. The two words are undoubtedly closely connected, and it is here that the theories of Waddell and Śarmā fall badly—Waddell has the monstrous explanation of *nevāra* as Tibetan [nē?], as above, + *-vār*, the East Hindī, Bihārī and Nepālī suffix indicating 'trade, profession, etc.'<sup>2</sup> Under *nepāl* and *newār* Turner<sup>3</sup> suggests that either (a) *nepāla-* is a Sanskritization of *nevāra-*, or (b) *nevāra-* is a later (Bihārī or E. Hindī) form of *nepāla-*. It may be feasible here to admit a modification of both alternatives simultaneously: (a) *nepāla-* is a re-Sanskritization of Prakrit *nevāla* < *\*naipāla-* (and Skt. *naipāla-*, *naipālīka-* later formations from this), and (b) *nevāra-* is a Bihārī, Eastern Hindī, or Nepālī development of Pkt. *nevāla*. -*r-* is the normal intervocalic development of -*l-* in these languages.<sup>4</sup>

Connexion between the Newārs and the Nāyars of Malabar, adequately repudiated by Lévi<sup>5</sup> yet still not infrequently alleged, can be maintained neither on linguistic nor on ethnic grounds.

Brief mention may perhaps be made here of the curious spellings of European visitors to the Valley in the 17th and 18th centuries. In Grueber's letters to his colleagues (c. 1662) and in Kircher's résumé of Grueber's activities (1665) appear the forms *Neebal* and *Necpal*; Geōrgi in the *Alphabetum Tibetanum* (1762) has *Nekbal*, also the missionary Marc (c. 1750) as recorded in *Gli Scritti del Padre Marco della Tomba*, ed. Florence 1878, and others. (Tavernier, however, contemporary with Grueber, has *Nupal*.) The form *Necpal* (is the *eo* meant to indicate a long vowel, and if so why?) does occur in one of Grueber's early letters, and it is possible that *Necpal* arose from a misreading of this, and a spelling pronunciation, developing from this, persisted in missionary circles, and that *Nekbal* later came into use as a pronunciation spelling. Nothing here, however, throws any fresh light on what was already an old problem, and it would appear that none of these strange orthographies has any phonetic basis.<sup>6</sup>

To summarize:—the 'traditional' interpretation of the name, *ne* + *pāla*, 'having *Ne* as protector', depends on the invention of a saint to fit in with the

<sup>1</sup> It might be tempting to regard *nīpa-* as an 'irregularity' in Sanskrit for *\*nī-apa*, *\*nīyapa*, and consider the -*e-* of *nepāla-* as a Prakrit development of OIA *\*-ya-*, cf. Pkt. *veggala*, Skt. *vy-agra* (vide Turner, *N.D.* s.v. *beglo*), as *vetāla*, Lassen's other example of 'die *gunirte* Form' may be interpreted as a Prakritism in Sanskrit from *vi-* + *√at* 'wander', extended by *-āla-*. But this irregularity is only apparent: when one assumes a pre-Skt. *\*nī* + *eH* > *\*nī-H* > *\*nīp*, the first process being brought about by a shift of stress, the 'irregularity' disappears.

<sup>2</sup> Chatterji, op. cit., § 417.

<sup>3</sup> *Nepali Dictionary*, p. 353.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Turner, *Festschrift Jacobi*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> op. cit., I, pp. 219 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> For further details vide Lévi, op. cit., I, pp. 86 sqq.

story ; Lassen's analysis of *nepāla*- as *nepa-* + *-āla*- is unsatisfactory as it stands ; the suggestion of Waddell is guesswork, not particularly inspired, and can hardly be taken seriously. A tentative suggestion has been made above to assume Skt. *nepāla*- as a back-formation from Pkt. *nevāla*, interpreting the latter as the development of the vṛddhied derivative of *\*nīpāla*. This is not offered as a conclusive solution ; in fact, with the limited material available, it is doubtful if a conclusive solution can be attained.

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